Annex "A," Subparagraph 1j,

Sociological Background

EDUCATION

871 Schools have existed in Finland from the early Middle Ages. Children were taught by monks in the cloisters, and in Turku there was a cathedral school for educating priests for the Church. Those wanting to pursue higher studies attended the universities in South and Central Europe, and the number of Finns in these institutions was proportionally high.

The reformation put an emphasis upon the education of the common people, and, as mentioned [212] in Subparagraph 1k, by the end of the seventeenth century literacy was already widespread in western Finland. As everywhere in Scandinavia, public education still holds an important position in the whole cultural development of the

871 country.

In the course of the last century education was transferred from the Church to the care of State

212 and the municipalities. Although school atten-
871 dance did not become compulsory until 1921, after Finland had obtained its independence, the people have for a long time been literate, all layers of the society included, even the semi-nomadic Lapps. Today illiteracy is kept at under one per cent, one of the lowest percentages in the world, and in practice the Finnish system of education has proved second to none, although, of course, there are always possibilities for reform.

871 The schools can be divided into three groups: 1) primary schools; 2) secondary schools, which are subdivided into middle schools and gymnasiums; and 3) the universities. Every child

795 Finland officially adopted the Lutheran creed.
771

The bishops and ministers worked energetically for the uprooting of the pagan beliefs and succeeded in extinguishing the old poetry (which was supposed to have been inspired by the devil)
212 in the western parts of the country. The Luth-
795 eran Church attached much importance to the instruction of the people and it deserves credit
[582] for effectively teaching the Finns to read. The ability to read and to write and a knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Church were made prerequisite for anyone wishing to enter matrimony, and slow readers were punished by being placed in stocks before the church on Sundays. Thus, in the western parts of the country, literacy was already quite common towards the end of the seventeenth century.

795 Even today the Lutheran Church holds by far